



Afternoon Alert - Wednesday, March 14, 2018

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## HEADLINES

### Noon news

NHK, Fuji TV, and TV Asahi led with reports on the Moritomo Gakuen scandal, saying that while Prime Minister Abe apologized at the Diet for the falsification of documents, he stressed once again that neither he nor his wife were involved in the sale of state-owned land to the private school operator. NTV and TBS gave top play to reports that the Justice Ministry began transferring 7 of the 13 former AUM Shinrikyo cult members on death row from a Tokyo detention center to other facilities.

## INTERNATIONAL

### FM Kono comments on dismissal of Secretary Tillerson

NHK reported that Foreign Minister Kono talked to reporters this morning about President Trump's dismissal of Secretary of State Tillerson. He was quoted as saying: "Our views sometime differed but he was someone whom I really trusted and could talk to in a candid manner. Personally, this situation is very regrettable." On the fact that CIA Director Pompeo was tapped to succeed Secretary Tillerson, Kono reportedly said: "The United States holds the key to the North Korea issue. I hope to meet with his successor as soon as possible and exchange views with him on such issues as North Korea. It is important for Japan, the United States, and South Korea to hold discussions and work closely before the planned summit between the U.S. and North Korea."

- [Japan sees no impact from Tillerson exit on N. Korea policy](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Three scenarios of U.S.-North Korea summit meeting](#) (Yomiuri)

## ECONOMY

### PM Abe expresses resolve to play leading role in early effectuation of TPP

NHK reported on its website that Prime Minister Abe said during a meeting of the Upper House Budget Committee that the TPP signed by 11 nations is a landmark achievement from the viewpoint

of promoting free trade and expressed his resolve to continue to play a leading role in the early effectuation of the agreement. The premier was quoted as saying: "The TPP not only reduces tariffs but also creates free and fair rules for the 21st century in a wide range of areas in the Asia-Pacific region. Although there are growing concerns about protectionism, the TPP is an extremely revolutionary achievement from the viewpoint of promoting free trade." Abe reportedly added: "Our nation, as a standard-bearer of free trade, will continue to exert leadership from the viewpoint of expanding the economic zone based on free and fair rules." Meanwhile, the network also quoted Economic and Fiscal Policy Minister Motegi as saying: "Japan welcomes the overall expansion of the TPP after its effectuation, but it will be extremely difficult to change the agreement when the U.S. or another nation joins. We will not engage in renegotiation that runs counter to our national interests."

- [Data falsification creates uphill battle for MOF over fiscal rebuilding, Japan-U.S. economic dialogue](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Japan steps up efforts to call on U.S. for exemption from new steel tariffs](#) (Sankei)
- [Nuclear business operators in serious talks on merging nuclear fuel units](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Commentary: Miscalculation in "TPP rules"](#) (Nikkei)
- [Japan's frozen beef imports recover to 90% of pre-BSE crisis level](#) (Nikkei)
- [Narita airport OK'd to expand hours for takeoffs, landings](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Editorial: TEPCO's priority is, and will be, to decommission crippled reactors](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)

## **POLITICS**

- [Prime minister's schedule on March 13, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Abe says he and wife 'not involved' in discount land scandal](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Abe scrambles to restore trust in light of Moritomo document tampering scandal](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Potential impact of Moritomo document tampering](#) (Asahi)
- [Doubts voiced about Finance Minister Aso keeping his job](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Ex-PM Koizumi blasts Abe, Aso's "poor judgment" on Moritomo affair](#) (Sankei)
- [Cartoon: The Abes and Moritomo](#) (Akahata)
- [Cartoon: Moritomo Gakuen scandal](#) (Asahi)
- [80 women offered opportunity to study at Seiko Noda's political school](#) (Mainichi)
- [Editorial: Alteration of documents damaging people's trust in administration](#) (The Japan News)
- [Editorial: Gov't at serious fault over alteration of land sale documents](#) (The Japan News)
- [LDP panel's leaders decide on wording of additional provisions under Article 9 of Constitution](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Proposed constitutional provisions on SDF stress maintaining interpretation of Article 9](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Akie Abe 'liked' Facebook post on 'silly questions' by opposition](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)

## OPINION POLLS

- [60% say “inter-Korea dialogue and U.S.-DPRK summit will not lead to Pyongyang’s halting of nuclear weapon and missile programs,” Sankei-FNN poll](#) (Sankei)
- [Opinion poll & results from Sankei Shimbun](#) (Sankei)

## EDUCATION

- [Native speakers in demand as Japanese schools step up English lessons](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Dwindling number of Japanese students at Harvard, other top U.S. universities](#) (SAPIO)

## SECURITY

- [Okinawa gov. calls for U.S. base transfer halt at Washington symposium](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Okinawa activist handed suspended sentence over anti-U.S. base protests](#) (Kyodo News)
- [U.S. aircraft carrier and MSDF helicopter destroyer conduct joint exercises in disputed South China Sea](#) (The Japan Times)

## OKINAWA LOCAL PRESS

### **Okinawa high school signs partnership agreement with U.S. university (Ryukyu Shimpo)**

Okinawa Shogaku Senior High School will conclude a partnership agreement with Gonzaga University, in the U.S. state of Washington, in October. Students of the Japanese school who meet comprehensive standards will be able to advance to the U.S. university without sitting for an entrance exam. The agreement will begin to be applied to students who graduate from Okinawa Shogaku Senior High School in March 2019.

Masaichiro Nashiro, deputy director of the educational corporation “Shogaku Gakuen,” Joseph Kinsella, vice-president of Gonzaga University, and Li Yang, head of Gonzaga University’s English Language Center, visited the head office of Ryukyu Shimpo in Ameku, Naha, on March 9 to announce the agreement. Nashiro underscored the benefits of the agreement, saying, “Gonzaga University is a prestigious private university in the U.S. It also has a credit exchange system with Japan’s Sophia University. It is significant that students will have a wider range of options.” Kinsella said, “I’m hoping that both sides change for the better through exchanges.”

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